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ABSTRACT

An issue of the journal devoted to teaching foreign languages to students with special educational needs, resulting from a New York State Board of Regents plan to require foreign languages of all students, contains these articles: "A New Challenge: The Foreign Language Learner with Special Educational Needs" (Harriet Barnett, John B. Webb); "Editor's Comments" (John B. Webb); "Teaching the Slower Student" (Lenora McCabe); "Foreign Languages for the Learning Disabled: A Reading Teacher's Perspective" (Harriet Barnett); "Foreign Languages for Special Education Students: A Special Education Teacher Speaks," (Jeff Miller); "Teaching All Students: An Inventory of Teachers, Classroom Strategies for Self-Analysis" (Anthony Papalia); and "Concluding Remarks" (Nancy McMahon, John Underwood). Listings of the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers' officers and committee chairpersons for 1985 are also included. (MSE)

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A SPECIAL ISSUE

Language Association Bulletin

New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers

VOL. XXXVI | January 1985 | No. 3

A New Challenge: The Foreign Language Learner With Special Educational Needs

Harriet Barnett and John B. Webb

Foreign language always has held a place in the curriculum of our State's schools. The study of a language other than English traditionally was seen as a means for developing cultural and intellectual sophistication among students and an exercise which would expand their minds. Indeed, to be in a language class was a signal to others that a student held a place that was a cut above the average. Foreign language was, in short, a discipline for the intellectually superior and socially elite who were to go on to advanced education and enter the respected professions.

To be a student of foreign languages was a mark of distinction, and even the teachers themselves boasted that they worked with only the very best students. In fact, this always has been a motivating factor for potential teachers of foreign languages.

Today, this almost purely academic view of language study has changed. The world wars, the need to conduct business across international boundaries, the efforts to attain and preserve a climate of peaceful cooperation among nations, and the arrival of millions of immigrants on our shores have given rise to a demand for communicative and cultural competence among a larger segment of our nation's population. The demands of the latter half of the 20th century have created a need for these comptencies which transcends the academic realm. Pursuit of our discipline is now motivated by pragmatism rather than pure intellectualism. To meet the new demands, schools turned to methods that would not just expand the mind and elevate the tastes, but would produce students capable of understanding and speaking the languages they were studying and of functioning within their respective linguistic and cultural environments both here at home and abroad.

Harriet Barnett, teacher of Spanisn and French, Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District, Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.
John B. Webb, Chairperson of Foreign Languages and ESL, Pomona Junior High School, East Ramapo Central School District, Spring Valley, N.Y.

The upsurge in interest and demand for language study forced teachers to seek appropriate methodologies and to turn to technology in their attempt to achieve their goals. Language labs, cassettes, video recordings, computers, shortwave radios, and a host of other kinds of equipment have been used to motivate students and improve their performance levels. Various techniques have been used to encourage students to speak and use the language.

While society's needs for people possessing language competence and the accompanying methodologies and teaching tools were changing, so was the student body. It soon became apparent that, if those societal needs were to be satisfied, language programs would have to include a larger percentage of the student body.

A discipline once reserved for the above-average students had to alter its approach so as to not only achieve communicative competence but to achieve it among the average as well as above-average students. Teachers also have accustomed themselves to working with both groups of students.

Enhanced awareness of the need for communicative and cultural competence has given rise to mandates which call for ALL students to achieve a certain level of proficiency in a foreign language. Furthermore, a close look at the culturally and linguistically plural nature of our society and the globally interdependent posture which all nations are being forced to assume, clearly indicates that every sector and every socioeconomic stratum of our society will require these competencies in order to function successfully.

This means that the foreign language programs and the teachers of foreign languages in our State's schools must now be prepared to accomodate yet a third segment of the student body – those youngsters traditionally referred to as below-average.

Herein lies the newest and perhaps the greatest challenge. The teachers of foreign languages will now be working with students: *(continued on page 3)*

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(continued from page 1)

- who have physical disabilities such as:
  - imperfect hearing
  - imperfect vision
  - perceptual-motor impairments
  - speech impediments
  - hyperactivity
- who have specific learning disabilities in skills needed for academic areas. They include:
  - thinking and remembering
  - spelling
  - handwriting
  - linguistic impairment
- who have other disabilities including:
  - mental retardation
  - emotional handicaps
  - neurological impairment
  - cultural and economic disadvantages
- who have social problems such as:
  - lacking a sense of propriety in interpersonal relations
  - exhibiting disruptive behavior which requires special discipline
  - hating school
  - hating foreigners
  - having a short attention span
  - being highly sensitive and insecure
- who lack native language skills such as:
  - ability to read or write
  - understanding of grammar
  - vocabulary

To give the reader an idea of the kind of challenge to be faced by teachers working with the kinds of students alluded to above, it may be wise to ask the following questions. They will cause most teachers to re-evaluate their tried and true teaching strategies.

- What do I do with students who cannot hear well or cannot hear sounds accurately?
  - Can I use a language lab?
- What do I do with students whose vision is severely impaired?
  - Can I use an overhead projector or mimeographed or thermofaxed materials?
- What do I do with students who lack visual-motor coordination?
  - Can I ask them to copy from the chalkboard?
- What do I do with students who are hyperactive?
  - Can I give them a long dictation or ask them to do any activity for 30 minutes?
- What do I do with students who have extreme difficulty articulating sounds accurately?
  - Can I ask them to repeat after me accurately?
- What do I do with students who have trouble remembering?
  - Can I ask them to memorize dialogues or vocabulary lists?
- What do I do with students whose handwriting is illegible because they cannot write?
  - Can I give them the same tests as everyone else?
- What do I do with students who hate school in general and foreign language in particular?
  - Can I use a grade as a motivational technique?
- What do I do with students who are severe discipline problems?
  - Can I get order by raising my voice?
- What do I do with students who read well below grade level?
  - Can I ask questions of inference?
- What do I do with students who are scared to speak out loud in class?
  - Can I insist on oral participation?
- What do I do with students who resent school because they always have been losers in every class?
  - Can I correct all of their errors?
- What do I do with students who have no apparent need to learn a foreign language?
  - Can I motivate the class with college entrance requirements?

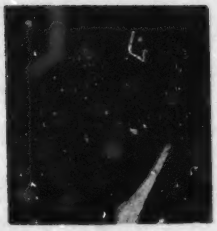
In the past, teachers of foreign languages had none of these concerns because below-average students would not have found their way to a foreign language class or would have dropped it before very long. They would not have been considered "language material." Now this is no longer the case, and proper attention to the kinds of questions asked above may well be the key to professional survival.

As foreign language teachers embark upon this new challenge and seek answers to those questions, it is important to keep in mind that you have a host of techniques at your command born of years of training and experience. There is no need for excessive fear because these students CAN be taught, and they CAN attain a level of proficiency. The challenge is really to break old habits and disavow old notions that such students cannot learn a second language. New ways can be found, and it CAN be done.

PROFESSIONAL CALENDAR

February 8-9	– NYSAFLT Board of Directors Meeting
March 3-9	– National Foreign Language Week
March 16	– Rochester Regional Meeting Nazareth College
March 21-23	– International Foreign Language Conference Sheraton Centre, Toronto
March 30	– Long Island Regional Meeting
April 26-28	– Northeast Conference New York City
April 27	– Buffalo Language Fair
May 3	– NYSAFLT/SED Colloquium Turf Inn, Albany
May 18	– Mid-Hudson Regional Meeting SUCNY at New Paltz
October 13-15	– NYSAFLT Annual Meeting Concord Hotel

Editor's Comments



John B. Webb

One day a while ago during a faculty lounge discussion of the Regents Plan and its foreign language requirement for ALL students, one of my highly respected colleagues of many years said to me, "Welcome, at long last, to the profession. You foreign language teachers are finally going to get a taste of what it's really like to have to teach." This comment reflects a long-held feeling on the part of many educators that foreign language teachers do not really know how to teach because we work only with the elite. A new era is beginning when foreign language teachers will join the ranks with their colleagues in teaching below-average as well as above-average children. For many, the addition of these students to our classes will cause few problems and they will be accepted as a matter of course. For others, initial exposure is likely to come as a bit of a shock. Either way, teaching below-average children requires that we carefully evaluate what we teach and how we do it.

Foreign language teachers are an energetic and enthusiastic group, and these qualities will serve us well. We have labored proudly to produce students who can speak the languages we teach (or at least conjugate a few of their verbs) and who will develop respect, or hopefully love, for those languages and their cultures. Soon, however, we will face a group of students who may differ to a considerable extent from those whom we have grown accustomed to teaching. In many instances, their academic experiences probably have been less successful over the years thereby giving rise to less-than-positive attitudes toward teachers, their courses and school in general. Those attitudes, if they are to be appropriately channeled, will require special measures. Their desire to learn a second language may be motivated less by the promise of future travel and careers than by everyday exposure to signs on public transportation or to neighbors from linguistically different groups. (Many people in rural areas are just plain angry about this requirement because they see no earthly reason why the son of a farmer in Roseboom, New York, should have to learn a second language, particularly if he is having trouble in school). Their learning styles will probably be less familiar to us, so we will have to grapple with different types of motivation and approaches to insure that our instructional objectives are met. In fact, we may have to have a serious look at our objectives.

Resistance to second language study for below-average students will probably be encountered from the students themselves, but I suspect that they will be more receptive than many parents AND administrators or other colleagues who sincerely believe that the foreign language requirement will confuse the children and deprive them of urgently needed remediation in English, the language of survival in the USA. In fact, I have heard administrators express this opininion so vehemently that they are urging defiance of the Commissioner's Regulations. This kind of situation creates double trouble for foreign language people because we must not only know how to teach students with whom we have had little experience, but we must, at the same time, be able to respond to the critics whom we are certain to encounter, particularly in the early years of the mandate.

As we contemplate the task, it might be a good idea for us to forget for a moment that we are teachers of a foreign language and concentrate on the fact that we are teachers of children. As such, we are responsible for the *whole* child and not just his second language development. Learning implies skill acquisition, the skills of thinking, analyzing, synthesizing and drawing well-founded conclusions based on certain input. It would be wise to examine foreign language study from that perspective and to focus on it in our planning so that the larger learning outcomes will overshadow, temporarily, our devotion to the language itself. We can call this a coming to terms with reality. In many instances, just getting through a school day is a difficult challenge for some children, so if their exposure to us is a positive human experience that day, school may be a better place than it was, perhaps, the day before. (There may have been no mention of relative pronouns, but some child may feel better about him/herself, and that is very important). To be educated is to be the product of a wide range, a corpus, of meaningful experiences. Foreign languages must hold a place there in the contexts of both the students' school and home experiences. Without this thread, this connection, much will be lost.

In short, it becomes essential to see beyond both the structural and the functional aspects of our discipline to the larger world which the child inhabits. Our task is to make certain that we as individual teachers and that what we teach will in some way enhance the ability to survive in that milieu or in any milieu the students may ultimately choose to inhabit. This view helps to make second language study more relevant, regardless of the school's geographical location and regardless of the students' academic standing.

NYSAFLT recognizes that the task facing its members is not an easy one, but it is hoped that this special issue of the *Bulletin* will give our readers some more material or food for thought that will prove beneficial.

NEED A JOB?
Contact NYSAFLT Placement Service
There may be an opening for you!
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90 Hotchkiss Circle, Penfield, NY 14526

Teaching the Slower Student

Lenora McCabe

When I first began my teaching career a long-time friend who taught first grade once said to me, "I can teach my first graders any topic. I just have to find the right way to present it." For example, she gathered all her first graders around her and told them a special story about the four brothers Cloud. Each brother was different both in appearance and personality. One was light and fluffy with a good disposition, and he was called Cumulus. Another was dark and brooding, had a terrible temper, and frequently exploded at everybody, and was called Nimbus. On and on the story went. By the time she finished with her tale, all the children knew about the four kinds of clouds and what weather each brought. In a sense, that is what our assignment is when we undertake the teaching of an academic subject to slower youngsters. We have to find the right words, the right approach, the right materials to entice more reluctant learners to reach for an understanding of what is essentially an academic subject.

This beginning appreciation for our disciplines rests almost entirely with the teacher. Here is the opportunity for you to be truly important. No other level of student is more dependant on the teacher than the slow learners. Teachers make or break their chances for success. These youngsters, more than all others, need our respect and affection, our skill and professional competence, our sense of humor and kindness, and all the myriad human qualities that go into creating the good teacher. If you want to be creative, here is your chance. If you feel unappreciated, just reach one of these children, and your reward will be more than you have received in years.

Slower learners want very much to please and be loved, just like all of us, but how difficult it is for them to achieve so basic a commodity in school. Have you ever been the only child in the room to get a twenty on the test? Have you felt the pain of being called on by the teacher when you had no idea of the expected answer? Have you been asked to read, when you stumbled over every other word and heard the whole class snicker? What a loss of esteem. What an attack on one's self-confidence. These are children who have been humiliated and ridiculed year after year. Is it any wonder that they find ways to disguise this pain by being the class clown, the class truant, the class troublemaker, the student who "doesn't care?" It takes real compassion and sensitivity to read between the lines of some of the finest dramatic performances ever seen. In his book, *Horace's Compromise,*[1] Theodore Sizer says that learning is painful. For few other children is this statement more true than for the slow learner.

So what do you do? Books have been written on classroom organization, methodology, expectations, etc. I suggest that you read one or two that make sense. For the moment, however, a few pointers can be offered form this twenty-year veteran in the field. Have firm but fair discipline. It is absolutely essential. Learning cannot take place in chaos. Have a high expectation of their ability to perform, but temper that with reason. These are not college seniors. Do not expect them to be what they cannot be, but always expect them to learn and make progress. Be serious about your subject and your purpose. Believe in what you are doing. If you come to class every day prepared with a proper lesson, materials organized, ready to work, so will they. If you have very little to do each day, they will get the message very quickly. Respect them as people. Be a role model. If you are good to them, you have a right to expect them to be good to you and to each other. Touch your students gently. A pat on the head, a smile, a gentle tap on the shoulder, all show approval and affection. Acknowledge them in the halls, the cafeteria, in study hall. Be glad to see them; Give compliments for a pretty dress, a new hairdo, a good ball game, a good paper, an improved effort. Always notice them. Do not praise bad behavior, but always separate the person from the action. "I always like you, but I do not always like what you do or say." Make the distinction. Try to keep calm, even when you are angry. Anger produces anger. Yelling begets more yelling. These students have been hollered at often. They are used to that. Be sunny. Be fun. Be consistent. Have some organization or daily routine so they know what is expected of them. These students handle sudden change less easily than others. Provide variety in your routine – some writing – some listening – some acting – some movement. Slow learners have a short attention span. It is not their fault. It is just a given. Give lots of repetition. Slower students do not retain and assimilate information as well as others. Build in some success that each can achieve. It is important, maybe even curcial, that they increase their self esteem.

I once taught a below level seventh grade social studies class that contained some very weak students. Mixed in this class were students much more capable of working on their own, reading and writing and generally learning. What to do with the bottom five? They read on a first or second grade level. They could not do the simplest task in social studies easily. I decided to give the class a work sheet based on material in their textbook. For the five weaker students, I had written a 1 in each textbook next to the answer for

Lenora McCabe, teacher of social studies and ESL, Pomona Junior High School, Spring Valley, NY.

question number one – a 2 next to the answer for question number two – and so on. I gathered the five around me in a little circle, and we all did the questions together. Each person read a few sentences to find the answer. When the first very slow student found the answer, he shouted out, "I found it, Miss McCabe! I found the answer!" The next thing I knew two or three others were creeping over to my area, wanting to get closer to the group to get some of the gravy we call success, or "right answers." I do not know how much each child learned that they could tell you now, but I am sure that the five who sat with me felt good about themselves, and the others who were better students, but not good students, felt good too, because they were not so afraid to be wrong. They had my attention and they were finding the right answer – a rare occurence for these students.

So – can these slower students learn a foreign language, one of the most elite subjects in the school? Well, yes, I think they can, provided you are going to emphasize conversation and not verb tenses. They can learn *Je m'appelle* Lenora or *Habla espagnol.* They can learn *Dis ist mein handt* or *Arrivedercci.* They can also learn a language if they are permitted to make a few mistakes just as they do in English. They may say or write *mon soeur* instead of *ma soeur.* They may put plates on *le table* in stead of *la table,* but they can learn something.

Is it easy teaching? No. Is it more work? Yes. Is it harder to do well? Yes. Does it represent a challenge? Oh, definitely yes. But you can do it. We, in other disciplines, have been doing it for years. Do we succeed with every student? No. Do not be afraid of some failure. We have all failed some slow learners some of the time, but do not write them off. They are great, if you approach the experience positively, and they deserve a chance to shine.

Should they try a language. Oh, yes, for sure. They live in all the neighborhoods where people come speaking Spanish, Créole, French, Vietnamese, etc. They work in the marketplace where all these others come. They may, in fact, have more direct contact with non-English speaking populations than any others. They also could profit from this knowledge when working in hospitals, nursing homes, city programs, schools, etc. They might even get those jobs more easily, and more importantly, be able to accept our newcomers more readily.

The first time it ever occurred to me that slow learners might enjoy learning a foreign language was when my school, Pomona Junior High School, in the East Ramapo School District, in suburban Spring Valley, New York, started getting Haitian students. Maybe it was ten years ago. The two young Haitian boys were put in my below grade level social studies class because we had no special program for foreign-born students. The two students were better students than anyone else in the room, but, because they did not know any English, they had quite a struggle. Days and weeks went by and my American-born students started asking questions about that "funny" language these two students were speaking. My two Haitian students knew both Créole and French, but, of course, I only knew a little French. Occassionally I spoke some French to help explain what we were doing in class. I put a few French words on the board – *Bon jour, Comment allez-vous?*, Je m'appelle ––, etc. I told all my students what each meant. All the students practiced saying these few expressions. One youngster finally blurted out, "Miss McCabe, I want to get me some of that French," I thought to myself, "Well, why not?"

NOTES

[1]Sizer, Theodore, Horace's Compromise, The Dilemma of the American High School, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1984.

A CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Nominating Committee of NYSAFLT needs your help in selecting people to fill the offices open for 1986. Nominations are sought for the following positions:

Officers: First Vice-President
Second Vice-President
Treasurer

Directors: Buffalo Region (1)
Capital District (1)
Westchester (1)
Med-Hudson Region (1)
New York City Region (1)
Southern Tier (1)

Nominating Committee: Members-at-large (7)

Qualifications:

Nominees for Vice-President and Secretary should have had experience teaching a foreign language or preparing teachers. They must have been members of NYSAFLT for a minimum period of five years, and shall preferably have had prior service on the Board of Directors.

Nominees for the position of Director should have demonstrated active leadership on NYSAFLT committees, workshops, and regional meetings; and should have been members of NYSAFLT for a minimum of three consecutive years.

Please send the names, addresses, institutional affiliations, and resumes of professional experience of the persons you would like to nominate to:

Lucille Lambert, *Chairperson*
106 Awixa Avenue
Bay Shore, New York 11706

Deadline for submitting nominations is:
March 20, 1985

Foreign Languages for the Learning Disabled: A Reading Teacher's Perspective

Harriet Barnett

In the September issue of *The Medical Forum*, a learning disability is described as ". . . a handicap that interferes with someone's ability to store, process, or produce information." [1] The terms most often used are terms we all have heard but with which we have not had too much contact. The kinds and combinations of problems are variable; in fact, the *Medical Forum* says that no two people with a learning disability are ever alike. [2] It is easier to talk in terms of specific deficits:

1) Difficulty in keeping attention focused: turning in and out, inconsistent performance, impulsive behavior and a negative self-image. (This is the most common deficit).
2) Language difficulties: oral, aural and written.
3) Spatial orientation problems: words look different, reversals in letters and in placement of letters and words are made.
4) Poor memory
5) Fine motor control problems: a breakdown between head and paper, handwriting difficulties.
6) Sequencing problems: difficulty in putting a series of items in correct order, difficulty in following instructions, difficulty in organizing work. (One way of handling these students is to give fewer instructions at one time).[3]

A commonality among the above students is that they appear depressed, overwhelmed, and have difficulty in making and keeping friends. They lose their motivation and stop trying, but they are not lazy or stupid.

I teach foreign languages and remedial reading. and am writing here, basically, as a Reading Specialist, but will not be able to help referring constantly to my experiences as a foreign language teacher of the learning disabled. My students are hyperactive, they have speech impediments, imperfect vision, perceptual – motor impairments and therefore have difficulty writing, spelling, thinking and remembering. There is little sense of grammar, and they have poor English vocabulary, they hate school, exhibit disruptive and improper behavior, and have severe emotional problems. These students of mine are disabled in one, some or many of the above-mentioned areas. One factor that is common to all of them, however, is that they are supersensitive.

They all come to me because they have reading problems – specifically that they have scored well below grade level in reading competency exams. Some have been labelled handicapped and some, though not labelled, are receiving extra help from our Resource Room specialist, speech therapist, psychologist, etc.

I would like to deal with two of their most common reading problems decoding and comprehension.

• DECODING. Students with decoding problems have difficulty processing what their eyes see. The normal eye examination given by the school or the eye-doctor does not pick up this problem since it is not a problem of the eye itself, but of what happens in the process of the brain's making sense of what the eye sees. Letters often seem distorted, letters and words are often reversed, lines seem to slide into other lines so that the students have difficulty keeping their place when reading. Their visual memory is very short and erratic so that by the time they get to the end of a line they cannot remember what they had read at the beginning of that line. What do I do with these students? The most important thing I do is make them understand that I realize they have a problem, that they are neither stupid nor lazy, and that I will understand and try to help them do the work. We have had practice exercises in holding our thumbs at the ends of the lines when reading so that those lines will not slip. (This is helpful in English and foreign language classes). I often write a part of a word that I feel will be easily reversed, such as "ie," bit by bit. For example, with *pienso*. We all write "pi," and when that is written, we continue with the "enso." I call their attention to word configurations. I remind them that a part goes on the end or at the beginning. I remind them of what the sentence said in the beginning after we get to the end so as to help give meaning to the whole. These are little tricks or clues that most students do not need. These are the tricks and clues that help my students to learn by giving them a boost, and which make them feel comfortable because they show that I care and that I understand that a problem does exist.

• COMPREHENSION. By the time the students are in the 7th grade or higher, the major problem is comprehension, or understanding what they have read. The students who are still experiencing some decoding problems will most certainly have comprehension problems because they are concentrating so much on what they see.

One of the most useful bits of information I ever learned is that there are levels of comprehension. The three terms most often used for the levels are:

1. *LITERAL* – the recognition of that which the author specifically states.
   i.e. a. Did Goldilocks like porridge?

Harriet Barnett, teacher of Spanish and French, Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District, Dobbs Ferry, New York.

b. Did Goldilocks break the wee bear's chair?
c. Was Goldilocks a blond?

2. *INTERPRETATIVE* – the recognition of the many alternatives which the author might have meant, although he did not state them specifically.
   i.e. a. Did the wee bear have more in common with Goldilocks than Mama and Papa did?
   b. Was Goldilocks a vandal?
   c. Was Goldilocks a very curious little girl?
3. *CREATIVE COMPREHENSION* – the individual's drawing upon his background of information and experience, to relate to that which is specifically stated or implied in the selection.
   i.e. a. Is a bear's home his castle?
   b. Is trespassing forbidden?
   c. Should small girls stay out of strange bedrooms?

What is the significance of these reading levels for the foreign language teacher? When the majority of foreign language students were the above-average, one could expect all levels of comprehension, or most certainly the literal and interpretative in the foreign language. Now that there will be many students who cannot read above the literal level in their native language, foreign language teachers will have to be aware of this in order to succeed with the students. Nothing could be more frustrating to all students, and especially to the new super sensitive ones, than to be expected to do more in the foreign language than they are able or expected to do in their native language.

Since teachers of foreign languages will soon be faced with the reality of these students in their class, what can be done to help insure a successful learning experience?

1) If you are working with a reading passage one positive technique is to give the students the questions before you give them the reading. Then they will know what to look for.
2) Stick to the literal level if your purpose is to find out what the student understands in the foreign language. Remember: "Is it stated?"
3) When translating vocabulary words to English, be sure to take time to explain the English meaning of the words. Many of the students will have a very poor English vocabulary. They may be able to give you the English meaning of a word without having any idea of what the word really means. Then what have you accomplished? By stopping to explain, you have improved the students' English vocabulary as well as their vocabulary in the target language.
4) Check the grade level of the material you are using. Often the reading level of the foreign language material is at a higher grade than that of the material the child can handle in his native language. There are formal and informal tests to use to check the reading level of materials. Often publishers state a grade level, but if many students are having difficulty, I suggest you check it yourself. One very informal way to check is to give the student the same material and ask the same questions in English. For example, I randomly select a reading passage from a book (one I have NOT presented to them). I translate the passage and the questions and give it to the class to do. If they have any difficulty with it, either the level of the text is too advanced or the questions beyond their comprehension level. Frustration would obviously set in with such material.

I would like to mention some activities common to foreign language teaching and give some clues as to what I do with my learning disabled students.

- *COPYING.* I try to make it brief. I check it carefully. I have students help others who are having great difficulty.
- *QUESTIONS.* I am sure to stick to the literal level or what is specifically stated. When I go on to an interpretative level, I do it on a volunteer or extra-credit basis. The students know whom I expect to volunteer or do extra credit, and the others are not frustrated because they are able to complete the basic work with satisfaction.
- *MEMORIZING.* When a student has great difficulty memorizing, I let him be the reader for someone else who has already memorized the dialogue. While reading it, he is learning it. Some students can memorize bits and pieces, and I whisper and fill in. Some students merely read their parts to me. This way they can participate and not feel totally frustrated.
- *FORMING QUESTIONS.* Our text has many exercises requiring formation of questions from answers with italicized portions. I used to skip these automatically because I thought they were too difficult for the students. Then I realized that they have trouble with this in English, so I decided to tackle it in Spanish, but slowly. We discussed why certain words were italicized. We learned the question words. I left them on the board with the sentences which had the key parts underlined. Little by little, every child was able at least to tell which question word would start the questions. Most of them went on to form the proper questions easily. When we came to this exercise in the English reading text, the improvement in performance was noticeable. When we had other exercises like this in Spanish class, they felt a great sense of pride in being able to do them.

With a little patience and compassion, you can find these students the most satisfying to work with. They have already been frustrated in their school experiences. They are starting something new with you, something in which YOU can see that they succeed. They may well become your most enthusiastic students.

NOTES

[1] "Learning: Abilities and Disabilities," The Harvard Medical School Health Letter, September, 1984, IX:11, 3.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

Foreign Languages for Special Education Students: A Special Education Teacher Speaks

Jeff Miller

Like many Special Education teachers who have *survived* five to ten years in the special class environment within the public school setting, I sometimes think I have, or should have, a great deal to say about the nature and programming of those students labelled or identified as "special." My wife and children would definitely agree that I usually have too much to say. I have taken home many of the issues that I am about to discuss time after time.

I am always humbled by the scope of our tasks in public education, and this is especially true now that we face planning for the "learning impaired" in many newly emerging programs, including foreign languages. I am beginning to have an idea of the scope of your task as foreign language teachers and can further sense that many educators are having mixed and very complex feelings about traditional foreign language students versus students with special needs. The day I opened the door to my *first* self-contained special education classroom, I thought, "Okay, Mr. Special Education Teacher, what makes you think you are qualified or able to do for these students what someone else before you *didn't, couldn't, wouldn't* or perhaps hasn't thought about or tried?" Today I still ask myself the same question from time to time. Even though I may not be able to articulate a definite answer, I can say that I am a better observer now and react faster to what I observe. Some of my observations may be of assistance to you as you approach the challenging tasks ahead.

Labels, medical technology, psycho-educational jargon and the elusive standard of normalcy all add to the "child held in disrepute process." There are more labels available than we can shake our Boards of Education at. Children who do not seem to *fit* the mold are thought to have so many problems that they are often excluded from trying courses for which the prerequisite is normalcy. Once labeled, both the child and the system make assumptions about potential. In this way, the "child held in disrepute process" sets the limits.

Emotional, social and cultural problems are common to all children. I believe these problems are intensified in the learning disabled students. The special or high risk children seem to focus on these problems. Their academic pursuits appear to be secondary or on hold until they can realize that an education can help with these problem areas. The following observations include what I have found to be common to the learning disabled students I have worked with. They are not prioritized or all-inclusive. Some deal with the traditional clinical model we often refer to in public schools; others deal with a holistic model.

These students are constantly struggling with the problem of self-fulfilling prophecy – they think they can't so they don't. They have retrieval and short-term memory deficits, and rote learning is easily lost. There is a tendency for them to be either better visual learners or auditory learners, but there is seldom equal strength in both processes. They lack confidence in the system and adults in general, particularly in junior and senior high. These students are concrete thinkers and often have difficulty with abstractions and aesthetics. It is difficult for them to apply previously learned information to new but related situations. Moving from one topic to another, shifting gears, during the same class period can cause problems. For example if a teacher were to move from the life of Simon Bolivar to conjugating verbs it would be difficult for them to follow. Many learning disabled students do not necessarily want to change their lot. They can be threatened by change and have difficulty believing that new and special interventions and special classes or teachers will help. Failure is often easier to cope with.

As foreign language teachers begin to construct programs, one of the challenges will be deciding whether your model will be homogeneous or heterogeneous. On the one hand, heterogeneous grouping provides a good opportunity to share a variety of learning experiences with a cross-section of intellectual, social and cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, tracking is beneficial in that it allows for modification to meet the needs of the distinct groups. A good compromise situation might be to combine both groups for special projects, presentations, trips, and other social activities.

Another concern of the foreign language teacher might be whether the programs established in various districts will end up being programs designed for the average or above-average student and then watered down for the learning disabled. Careful thought must also be given to whether the course designed for special students will be experiential in nature or competency based.

Some time ago, I was thinking about ways to deal with some of the concerns just pointed out. At that time, I was working with the self-contained model on a daily basis and wanted to promote mainstreaming to students and co-workers. I wanted my high school age students, most of whom had previously been transported away from the home school for their

Jeff Miller, Teacher of Special Education, Cazenovia Central School District, Cazenovia, New York.

educational programs, to break away from the traditional stereotypes to get a better picture of themselves and their counterparts in the mainstream, and vise-versa. I wanted to expand the self-contained format over a reasonable length of time, keeping in mind that special education students are often reluctant to change and that the system needs time to adjust.

Because I had previous experience and good luck using a student mentor approach, I asked the foreign language supervisor to provide me with an advanced student of Spanish. The mentor and I discussed the following aspects of this project: a) life skills – getting to know the mentor as a person; b) a touch of reality – fostering communication between two vastly different socioeconomic and intellectual backgrounds; c) conditioning – anticipating the continuation of the mentor model in other subject areas; d) motivation – providing a non-threatening experience in learning an academic subject. Keep in mind that this group was rough and tough and not too sure that school was the best place to be.

I was surprised at the rate at which most were able to learn to count from one to twenty and to name objects in the classroom, school, home and community. The students and mentor were more enthusiastic than I had anticipated. The mentor was pleasantly surprised with the students' progress and courtesy, as well as with herself. She seemed eager to return and I often saw her taking the time to say, "Hello," to my students as they passed in the halls. I am sure that many of my students surprised themselves. And yes, they did ask how to swear in Spanish and wanted to know Spanish names for unmentionable body parts. (Fortunately, they did not ask the mentor, and I could not tell them anyway). Our final activity featured a mini-fiesta complete with piñata and some tacos that we prepared in the classroom. The mentor brought in slides of her trip to Mexico.

This was a small project compared to the projects you will be undertaking with your students, but it was successful in many ways. It helped to pave the way for future mainstreaming efforts. I do recommend that you consider the use of mentors when you plan for the learning disabled. Students and adults from the community always have been a vital part of my work with my classes.

This is a new challenge for all of us and the obstacles may seem overwhelming at this time. I believe that if foreign language and special education teachers work together programs can be designed and implemented which will benefit many of our learning disabled students – without causing early retirements Statewide

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From the President

I am looking forward with great anticipation to the coming year and to the implications of the recent developments in language teaching. All of us in the profession must share an enthusiasm that will affect our students, our school administrators, and subsequently spill over to the general public.

NYSAFLT played a key role in drawing up the new mandates and will continue to play a major part in the implementation of the new regulations pertaining to language for all students. Now that the future is upon us we must join together and take the necessary steps to ensure that the mandates are successfully implemented.

Attendance at Regional Meetings will help keep us informed of new developments in the field of language teaching and of new techniques for use in the classroom. Publications also keep one abreast in the field. State level meetings such as the Colloquium and the Annual Meeting are prime opportunities for professional growth. NYSAFLT's publications are focusing on gearing up for the implementation of the Regents' Action Plan. For example, this thematic *Bulletin* issue, centering on "The Foreign Language Learner with Special Needs" will help us meet the challenge of teaching students who have serious difficulties with a traditional curriculum. The *Newsletter* with its brief articles and announcements is extremely valuable for keeping informed of current opportunities for professional growth. A new publication, *Communicative Syllabus: Teaching for Meaning and Communication* is to be published this year.

Two excellent opportunities for professional development are the 1985 Colloquium and the Annual Meeting. Look for information on these meetings in the *Bulletin* and in the *Newsletter* and plan to attend. If you wish to be on the program as a host, hostess, or a recorder contact the Chairpersons immediately (See addresses elsewhere in this issue). An additional bonus conference will be held this spring in Toronto. Co-sponsored by the Ontario Modern Language Teachers Association (OMLTA) and NYSAFLT, the Sixth International Conference will make accessible to New York State Teachers an additional major conference. All teachers will receive registration materials and information; if not contact NYSAFLT Headquarters.

NYSAFLT's thirty-five committees listed in the *Bulletin* insert offer a splendid opportunity to become involved. Feel free to contact any of the listed committee co-chairs with questions or with requests

Accept as a personal challenge to involve a colleague either for renewal or by initiating a new member. It is up to us to be prepared and to prepare others in order that, as a profession we remain strong and grow with the Regents Action Plan.

Paul W. Wood, President

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William Marceau, CSJ	3479 East Avenue Rochester, New York 14618	St. John Fisher College 3690 East Avenue Rochester, New York 14618 (716)586-4140

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SUMMER 1986

For further information and application contact:

Ms. Cheryl Gillen
30 Holloway Road
Rochester, New York 14610

Completed applications must be postmarked no later than AUGUST 25.

1985 GOETHE HOUSE AWARD

For applications write to:
Elaine Kraus
192 Inglewood Drive
Rochester, New York 14619

or

Mary Champagne
Greece Arcadia High School
120 Island Cottage Road
Rochester, New York 14612

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Teaching All Students: An Inventory of Teachers' Classroom Strategies for Self-Analysis

Anthony Papalia, SUNY at Buffalo

Research is hardly needed to demonstrate that the quality of teaching is the key to the success of an educational program. A poor teacher will impart little to his/her students, while a superior teacher will transcend a poor textbook or faulty organization and will make learning interesting and relevant.

Foreign language programs depend in large part on the teachers for success and for the profit to be derived from them. How teachers deal with learning environments, planning and organization, management and control, application of knowledge, teaching/learning climate, and personal/professional relationships determine how successful they are in teaching all students. The following inventory allows teachers to examine what they tend to do with these topics and it assists in identifying successful behaviors in teaching all students.

I. THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

	Doing all right	Need to do it more	Need to do it less
1. *Giving attention to the emotional atmosphere of the classroom:*			
• I show evidence of concern about students with emotional problems;	_____	_____	_____
• I develop a relaxed atmosphere;	_____	_____	_____
• I direct attention toward the search for causes, rather than treatment of symptoms;	_____	_____	_____
• I attempt to identify students who are easily distracted and do not follow directions;	_____	_____	_____
• I attempt to identify students who have certain learning disabilities.	_____	_____	_____
2. *Showing sensitivity to pupils' concern:*			
• I am conscious of classroom lighting, ventilation, and temperature;	_____	_____	_____
• I let students assume responsibilities for insuring classroom comfort;	_____	_____	_____
• When appropriate, I let students select their seats in the classroom;	_____	_____	_____
• When appropriate, I use small group seating arrangements.	_____	_____	_____
3. *Providing an attractive, esthetically-satisfying environment:*			
• I use the bulletin boards to show evidence of our planning;	_____	_____	_____
• I use displays to develop a pleasant, attractive and inviting room;	_____	_____	_____
• I display students' projects around the room;	_____	_____	_____
• I have students assist in developing a bulletin board reflecting the topics of each unit;	_____	_____	_____
• I have students write to travel agencies and foreign consulates for realia to be displayed in the classroom.	_____	_____	_____
4. *Using a variety of instructional materials:*			
• I use supplementary authentic documents;			
• I use films, recordings, videotapes, and other print and non-print materials;	_____	_____	_____
• I develop instructional materials to clarify the use of structures and to provide communicative opportunities;	_____	_____	_____
• I use multi-sensory materials which involve hearing, seeing and doing;	_____	_____	_____

	Doing all right	Need to do it more	Need to do it less
● I use audio - and perceptual-motor activities such as pantomine, dramatization and simulations;			
● I use materials which contain authentic language and facilitate face-to-face interaction on the topics identified in the NYS Communicative Syllabus;			
● I use materials which incorporate pictorial collages for students to describe events and to develop possible conversations taking place among the characters depicted in the scenes.			
5. *Using community resources:*			
● I use community resources and people;			
● I use field trips, thus the community becomes an extension of my classroom;			
● I assign cultural projects which can be completed by using community resources;			
● I ask students to interview natives on certain cultural and folkloric topics and to develop appropriate reports.			

II. PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

1. *Showing knowledge of methods and materials in pre-planning ability:*			
● I make flexible plans, directly connected with stated objectives;			
● I make long-range as well as day-to-day plans;			
● I am able to relate material within a unit and from one unit to another;			
● I organize my lessons according to topics, situations and functions;			
● I identify specific structures useful to express the selected functions;			
● I identify the cultural points present in the context;			
● I tend to use approaches to match students' learning styles;			
● I incorporate elements in my approach for students to realize how they learn;			
● I teach efficient strategies to be used in specific tasks;			
● I use approaches which emphasize hearing, seeing and doing;			
● I use activities which go from the concrete to the abstract, from observation to discovery.			
2. *Demonstrating ability to plan with pupils:*			
● I plan effectively with the students through democratic group processes most of the time;			
● I plan for the students but with their concerns in mind;			
● I plan with the students on the topics to be covered in class;			
● I plan with students certain settings with lists of vocabulary and functions to generate conversations appropriate to the situations.			
3. *Setting realistic and worthwhile goals:*			
● I develop goals consistently relevant and appropriate to course content and level of difficulty;			

	Doing all right	Need to do it more	Need to do it less
●I am able to make fair estimates of time necessary for teaching-learning of given material;			
●I am willing to try new ideas;			
●I use an inventory to determine students' interests;			
●I use students' suggestions to formulate goals.			
4. *Showing flexibility in meeting change:*			
●I am able to meet unexpected changes;			
●I make definite provisions for choice of students;			
●I insure flexibility through dependence upon group decisions;			
●I am willing to incorporate supplementary materials;			
●I create a cultural island.			

III. MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

1. *Overall management of the classroom:*			
●I attempt to balance friendliness with firmness;			
●I gain respect of students;			
●I work increasingly toward pupil self-direction;			
●I make homework assignments relevant and I do follow-up;			
●I move around the room;			
●I maintain a lively pace;			
●I make use of positive reinforcements;			
●I give students opportunities to take part in planning and decision making;			
●I create a supportive classroom environment in which students feel free to communicate.			
2. *Handling problems of discipline effectively:*			
●I develop a learning environment in which few disciplinary problems arise;			
●I show understanding, patience and good humor in dealing with unacceptable behavior;			
●I maintain discipline according to school policies;			
●I insure that students are aware of what is expected of them.			
3. *Making standards of behavior known to students:*			
●I provide opportunities for decision making;			
●I develop with the class behavior standards that are agreed upon through pupil-teacher discussion;			
●I move toward students' self-discipline.			
4. *Developing rapport with students:*			
●I encourage that students give evidence of consideration for each other while sustaining the teaching/learning activity;			
●I am consistent in dealing with students;			
●I promote a cooperative attitude.			

IV. APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

1. *Giving evidence of background preparation:*			
●I am well-prepared;			
●I show evidence of background study and a keen interest in continued research in subject area.			

	Doing all right	Need to do it more	Need to do it less
2. *Demonstrating skill in applying knowledge through teaching:*			
• I have the ability to convey material in meaningful, functional situations to touch students' lives;			
• I accommodate for individual differences;			
• I focus on the learner and on his/her needs for communicating;			
• I am able to use effectively the plans and approaches that I have pre-planned.			
3. *Recognizing the worth of one's experiences and their uses in teaching:*			
• I use personal illustrations and interpretations to supplement study;			
• I attempt to enliven subject matter through personalized interpretation;			
• I provide opportunities for students to draw from their experiences;			
• I use group tasks where students have the opportunity to share.			
4. *Pointing out the inter-relatedness of knowledge to students:*			
• I relate subject matter to the lives of students;			
• I bring out interrelated generalizations;			
• I correlate subject matter areas;			
• I let students explore ways of solving problems;			
• I give short objective tasks which cut across disciplines and give immediate feedback.			

V. TEACHING/LEARNING CLIMATE

1. *Utilizing learning opportunities:*			
• I recognize and utilize learning opportunities through many approaches;			
• I show ability to change plans to meet new conditions;			
• I guide students to discover rules through questioning;			
• I provide in the classroom situations where language is used in a natural way.			
2. *Communicating effectively with students:*			
• I have a good rapport with students;			
• I provide face-to-face interaction with peers on topics appropriate for discussion;			
• I am skillful in promoting discussion and bringing out communication skills of students;			
• I provide the opportunity to use language in relevant and meaningful situations such as reporting, seeking and giving information about facts, events, and feelings appropriate to the topic.			
3. *Writing as a communicative skill:*			
• I use the blackboard effectively;			
• I have students combining sentences;			
• My written comments are consistently clear and to the point;			
• I present a series of pictures to students and together we develop compositions;			
• I move students from labeling items on a picture to drawing inferences.			

	Doing all right	Need to do it more	Need to do it less
4. *Involving class in group learning activities:*			
•I involve the class to work in pairs in small or large groups appropriate to the particular task;			
•I consistently get feedback on progress of group assignments;			
•I provide opportunities for students to evaluate the role they played in their group.			
5. *Involving class in individual learning activities:*			
•I blend individual and group techniques effectively;			
•Students are willing to participate as individuals and are not afraid to respond incorrectly;			
•Individual and group tasks are chosen appropriately;			
•I provide opportunities for students to work alone;			
•I use self-pacing materials.			
6. *Demonstrating skill in evaluation processes:*			
•I utilize many forms for evaluating student progress;			
•I use teacher-made tests;			
•I use student-teacher contracts;			
•I use student evaluation;			
•I use visual observation of students over a period of time;			
•I use integrative tests;			
•I use discrete point tests.			

VI. PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

1. *Making use of a sense of humor:*			
•I have a good sense of humor;			
•I am able to take a joke;			
•I laugh with students at times;			
•I present a cartoon and ask students to provide punch lines.			
2. *Exhibiting poise and self-confidence:*			
•I like to be with others;			
•I believe in students' own capacities;			
•I find some success in meeting problems;			
•I like young people and show respect for the ability and worth of every student.			
3. *Demonstrating emotional stability:*			
•I am cheerful;			
•I meet difficulties calmly;			
•I am relatively stable and dependable;			
•I provide security and support to students;			
•I am patient and fair with students.			
4. *Showing initiative:*			
•I am usually ready to assume responsibilities;			
•I work to develop initiative in students;			
•I consult with other teachers;			
•I am willing to give extra time to students;			
•I show enthusiasm for teaching.			
5. *Establishing effective relationships with parents:*			
•I attempt to keep parents informed of student progress;			

	Doing all right	Need to do it more	Need to do it less
• I attempt to secure information about home background;			
• I seek parental help with behavior problems.			
6. *Establishing effective relationships with faculty:*			
• I seek opportunities to communicate with other language teachers;			
• I work cooperatively with them;			
• I attempt to become acquainted with other personnel in the school and attempt to explain our language program;			
• I am cooperative with other members of faculty and staff.			
7. *Showing care in personal appearance:*			
• I give attention to grooming;			
• I usually dress appropriately.			
8. *Giving evidence of dependability:*			
• I notify people sufficiently in advance when unable to keep appointments;			
• I carry out assumed responsibilities;			
• I seek further responsibilities;			
• I am consistently dependable;			
• I continually try to improve.			
9. *Professional activities:*			
• I join professional associations;			
• I read professional journals in my area;			
• I attend professional meetings and workshops to upgrade my skills.			

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Concluding Remarks

Nancy McMahon and John Underwood
Co-Chairpersons, NYSAFLT Standing Committee on the
Foreign Language Learner with Special Needs

Many teachers in the foreign language profession have long advocated the teaching of a second language to *all* students. However, the reality of the Regents' Action Plan demands that we now recognize the *need* to accommodate a segment of the student population traditionally referred to as "below average."

As we begin to implement the foreign language components of the Regents' Action Plan, we should not lose sight of the rationale for the inclusion of these requirements in the Plan: "This Action Plan is addressed to the task of anticipating future needs and obligations for New Yorkers."[1] It might be added that due to the increased mobility of our population these anticipated needs and obligations must be viewed in a much broader context, nationally and even internationally. Furthermore, "Our Plan centers on the standards which reflect best judgment of what our children *must know and be able to do in their 21st century lifetime.*"[2]

Beyond teaching our students the fundamentals of language, we must remind them that they will have to encounter a reality greater than their own. The Regents have concluded that "Many factors influence decisions on educational standards. These include: the demand on each person to understand and use more complex knowledge; the need to increase our society's capacity to govern itself under the principles of a free, democratic republic with the awful tension between preparing for long-term objectives and living with potential split-second decisions which may mean the difference between life and death on this globe; the demand for strengthening connections among people of many backgrounds within the State and with people all over this world; and the importance of relating new knowledge, discovery and invention and the development of skills to the economic potential of our society."[3]

The mandates of the Regents' Action Plan should not be the sole motivation for reaching all students in the foreign language classroom. We are all cognizant of the increased need for global awareness and foreign language competency in today's world. In addition to the exigencies inherent in the need for this "new civic literacy" we must also bear in mind that by the 21st century all students will need higher level intellectual skills to function productively in the workplace. Studies project that by the year 2000 process skills will be more important than content skills in job training.[4] It has been stated that language study contributes to the development of whole new approaches and strategies for learning, in that students are forced to analyze the structure of a language, and to choose from numerous options in order to express themselves effectively.[5]

As the "slower" student, in particular, will most probably be engaged in occupations not as yet conceived, it is incumbent upon us as professional educators to provide foreign language instruction for all students, not merely those tracked into a Regents program, in order to help them develop the process skills necessary for survival in the decades to come. We, in our discipline, must become part of a movement which will help insure that these students, who for whatever reason are termed "below average," do not become the disenfranchised person of the 21st century.

NOTES

[1]New York State Board of Regents Proposed Action Plan to Improve Elementary and Secondary Education Results in New York. Revised Plan, February, 1984, p. 1
[2]Ibid..
[3]Ibid.
[4]Marilyn Ferguson, The Aquarian Conspiracy. Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, 1980. pp. 289-291.
[5]Anthony Papalia, "From the President," Language Association Bulletin, September, 1983, p. 10.

1984-1985 SCHOLARSHIP AWARD REMINDER

The Student Scholarship Award Committee wishes to remind the membership that the time has come for the 1985 nomination procedures to begin.

Sponsoring teachers must be current members of NYSAFLT and may nominate graduating students of demonstrated excellence to the Regional Directors (no more than two nominees may be submitted from one high school).

NOMINATION PACKETS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM:
Mr. Robert J. Ludwig
Administration Assistant, NYSAFLT
1102 Ardsley Road
Schenectady, New York 12308

OTHER INQUIRIES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:
Dr. Philip A. Fulvi
Chairman, S.S.A. Comm., NYSAFLT
Chairman, Modern Languages and Cultures
Dyson College, Pace University
1 Pace Plaza, New York, New York 10038

DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS TO THE REGIONAL DIRECTORS: MARCH 15, 1985